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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Fifty-eighth session

Summary record of the 1219th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 2 July 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ameline

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Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of India

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of India (CEDAW/C/IND/4-5; CEDAW/C/IND/Q/4-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of India took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India), introducing the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of India (CEDAW/C/IND/4-5), said that the reports had been prepared in consultation with various stakeholders, including the state governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and United Nations organizations.

3. According to the 2011 census, India had 1.2 billion inhabitants, with women representing 48.5 per cent of the population. India was the world's largest federal democracy and enjoyed socioeconomic, cultural and geographic diversity, which was its strength, but also posed challenges to policymakers.

4. Respect for women and their rights flowed from the ancient traditions of Indian civilization and were enshrined in the Constitution and laws. Considerable efforts were being made to ensure women's empowerment and women played an important role in all walks of life, despite some challenges.

5. National and international attention had recently been drawn to incidents of violence against women, which were condemnable and had no place in a civilized society; however, they were not widespread. People, civil society and the media had strongly opposed such crimes and called for urgent action to punish the perpetrators. The Government and the judiciary were working to put appropriate measures in place.

6. India was party to six of the core international human rights conventions and it intended to broaden its participation in international legislation to secure equal rights for women and to work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination against them. Over the past few years, significant steps had been taken to improve transparency and efficiency in governance, leading to a rights-based approach. New legislation had been enacted, including the Right to Information Act, Right to Public Services Act, and the Right to Education Act. New policies, legislation and targeted programmes for the advancement of women were being implemented.

7. The Government's key developmental goals for women were gender equality and empowerment, through strategies such as economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling legislation, women's participation in governance, inclusion of all vulnerable and marginalized women, and gender-sensitive policies and programmes.

8. Landmark legislation had been enacted in 2013, including the National Food Security Act, which aimed to ensure food and nutritional security to identified eligible households, with specific provisions for women and children. It granted the right to receive an adequate quantity of food grains at subsidized prices to about two thirds of the population and provided free meals to pregnant and lactating women. Other major initiatives had been the enactment of legislation protecting women in the workplace against sexual harassment, and of the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Act. It had introduced comprehensive amendments to legislation to cover the varied nature of sexual offences committed against women, including acid attacks, sexual harassment and stalking. The definition of rape had been widened to include non-penetrative sex, and provisions on aggravated rape had been expanded to include rape committed by a person in a position of

dominance, a member of the Armed Forces, during communal or sectarian violence, or on a woman incapable of giving consent. Increased penalties, including capital punishment, had been established for gang rape and for causing serious injury to the victim. Public servants who failed to record information relating to sexual offences were now liable to penalties and it was mandatory for all hospitals to provide free medical aid to victims. Other legislation introduced addressed trafficking, manual scavenging and the protection of children against sexual offences.

9. The Government was implementing or planned to implement a range of programmes for the advancement of women, in the following areas: protecting women's dignity and safety; combating human trafficking; providing restorative justice and victim compensation; providing support for victims of sexual violence; addressing the gender gap in literacy, education and school attendance; promoting women's economic empowerment and work opportunities through skills' updating, training and microcredit schemes and income-generating activities for women from the Scheduled Tribes; and poverty eradication.

10. Health-care initiatives targeted at women included: schemes to help cover the health-care, drug, food and transport costs of pregnant and lactating women, and to promote their good health and nutrition; a tracking system to ensure delivery of health-care services to pregnant women; and a bill to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS, prohibiting discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS, including women, and providing for informed consent and confidentiality with regard to treatment.

11. The Gender Budget Statement introduced as part of the Union Budget was an important tool for reporting on funds allocated to women. The number of ministries reflecting their schemes and programmes in the Gender Budget Statement had increased from 9 to 30 and the Gender Budget had also increased from 2.79 per cent to 5.83 per cent.

12. Other developments to promote the advancement of women were the setting up of the High-Level Commission on the Status of Women, composed of representatives from civil society and other stakeholders, to undertake a study into the status of women and develop appropriate policies. The National Commission for Women, a statutory body under the auspices of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, had been mandated to review constitutional and legal safeguards for women and recommend remedial measures. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women had encouraged 32 states/Union Territories to set up similar missions at the state level.

13. India was fully aware of the enormous challenges posed by the implementation of existing policies and programmes. It had adopted new groundbreaking legislation protecting women from violence and amendments to existing legislation to address gaps. The immediate challenge was to step up efforts to ensure adequate training and capacity-building of all persons working with women to ensure an enabling environment for gender equality. He reiterated the Government's commitment to continue to work towards ensuring that all women enjoyed their rights.

Articles 1 to 3

14. **Ms. Šimonović** said that although India had incorporated international treaties into domestic legislation, the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations on previous reports had not been fully implemented. The inclusion of a prohibition on gender-based discrimination fell short of fully incorporating articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. What measures were envisaged to implement the recommendations in question, particularly through a comprehensive law to address all forms of discrimination against women?

15. She asked why India was not considering ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention; whether the instrument had been translated into all the State party's official languages; and whether training had been provided for lawyers and judges. She requested more information on cooperation between the Ministry of Women and Child Development and non-governmental organizations on implementing the Convention and the women's agenda.

16. **Ms. Patten** asked what follow-up was being given to the recommendations on the Armed Forces contained in the Report of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law (Justice Verma Committee Report), especially those relating to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). She drew particular attention to the recommendations that sexual violence against women by members of the Armed Forces or uniformed personnel must be brought under the purview of ordinary criminal law and that the continuance of AFSPA and AFSPA-like legal protocols in internal conflict areas should be reviewed. Pending the repeal of the Act, she wondered whether the Government might consider removing the requirement for government permission to prosecute soldiers accused of crimes involving violence against women and other human rights abuses, including for cases already under way.

17. She asked how the new Government intended to follow up the Committee's recommendations of 2010 regarding the security of and return to normality for the victims and survivors of the communal violence in Gujarat. Would the victims be granted ownership of the houses in which they were living, be given the resources and freedom to relocate, if necessary, and have access to basic amenities and victim protection? She wondered whether internally displaced persons living below the poverty line benefited from social security schemes allowing for their social and economic integration, and received food aid.

18. She wished to know how involved women were in the ongoing peace talks in the north-eastern states of India. What action was being taken to ensure their participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution, that their voices were heard at all levels of preventive diplomacy, mediation, social reconciliation and peace negotiations?

19. While commending India's housing project in the north and east of Sri Lanka, she was disappointed by the reports that it had not benefited women, especially the most vulnerable, who were living in military-style temporary shelters, with no sustainable income. Were there plans to conduct an immediate review of the project and a gender impact analysis for its future phases?

20. She reminded the State party that the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 addressed the extraterritorial application of the Convention, which applied to a wide range of situations, including to bilateral or multilateral donor assistance for conflict prevention and humanitarian aid and to mitigation or post-conflict reconstruction.

21. **Ms. Pires** asked whether a midterm review had been carried out of the work of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women. If so, had any gaps been identified? She requested specific examples of the Mission's contribution to improving the harmonization and implementation of gender equality programmes and policies and the enforcement of legislation on women's rights at all government levels.

22. Regarding the proposed amendments to the National Commission for Women announced on the government website the previous day, she enquired about consultations with civil society and whether the proposed amendments had emanated from the recommendations of the parliamentary committee established to review the work of the Commission. Did the amendments provide for changing the Commission's status and the appointment procedure for commissioners? She asked whether there was a national

commission for women in all states, in addition to the one established in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. If so, were they fully functional and adequately staffed and financed?

23. She asked whether the Ministry of Women and Child Development faced any challenges in fulfilling its broad implementation and coordination role. What percentage of the overall national budget was allocated to the ministry and how did that compare to the percentage allocated to children, or to mothers by extension? She sought the State party's views on independent reports that 90 per cent of the ministry's budget was allocated to children.

24. She welcomed the rise in the number of ministries reflecting their schemes and programmes in the Gender Budget Statement, and the fact that the Gender Budget had been increased from 2.79 to 5.83 per cent. However, she asked why it fell short of the target of 30 per cent of planned development expenditure for women across all sectors.

25. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) cited three cases that had been referred to the Supreme Court in which the Convention had been clearly invoked. Domestic courts were obliged to take due account of international conventions and the law clearly prohibited discrimination against women.

26. The Government was taking steps to translate national and international human rights instruments. He did not know whether the Convention had been translated into all of the official languages, although it had been translated into Hindi, meaning that over half of the population was able to read it in either Hindi or English.

27. Regular training on human rights was provided for government officials, members of the judiciary, medical professionals, police and prison officers, members of the Armed Forces and the general public. Human rights education was included in teacher-training programmes and the national school curriculum.

28. The national Constitution prohibited all forms of discrimination based on sex and the relevant provisions also applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Care was taken to ensure that all policies, programmes and legislation put in place by the state governments and the central Government were non-discriminatory. Similarly, all rights enshrined in the Constitution were enjoyed by the people living in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

29. **Ms. Sekhar** (India) said that, prior to ratification of the Convention, the Government had checked what implementing legislation already existed and had taken steps to address the remaining intricacies of the Convention. Article 51 (c) of the Constitution, on the State's commitment to foster respect for international law, was robust enough to allow the Government to incorporate any obligations under international human rights law into domestic legislation. Regarding the translation of the Convention into other languages, various state governments had come forward voluntarily to translate it into the local vernacular. India had not ratified the Optional Protocol since the country's constitutional and legal frameworks were sufficient for addressing rights violations. Indeed, articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution provided citizens with direct access to the Supreme Court and high courts; India often received visits from special rapporteurs and groups representing minorities and it was receptive to guidance on the implementation of the Convention.

30. **Mr. Gangte** (India) said that aspects of the Convention had been included in school curricula. He cited from the Kerala Curriculum Framework 2007, which mentioned the need for children to develop an awareness of their own and others' rights under the various United Nations treaty bodies.

31. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) stressed that India faced significant difficulties in securing its borders, particularly in the north-east and north, and that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act was therefore essential for protecting the Armed Forces and could not be repealed.

Nonetheless, stringent standard operating procedures were in place to prevent special powers from being misused: in every case involving deaths, police officers must accompany military staff; each incident was considered at senior level; strict penalties were applied for abuse of powers; and the Government conducted regular reviews of the regions in which the Act should apply. Governmental permission was still required to prosecute soldiers because the Government, and not the Armed Forces, was vested with the power to consider the merits of each case and decide whether to prosecute.

32. With regard to the Gujarat riots, the Supreme Court had appointed a special investigation team which had recorded all statements by witnesses, drawn up a report and submitted it to the Supreme Court. The Court had ordered further inquiries into nine major cases where allegations had been made by NGOs. In total, six cases had been concluded, three were pending and 149 individuals had been convicted.

33. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that no midterm review of the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women was planned. Regarding the National Commission for Women, consultations with civil society had been aimed at improving discussions; the amendments could not change the status of the Commission, which, in effect, was already independent, even if it came under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. All government departments made their own budgetary allocations for women, but aimed to earmark at least 30 per cent for female empowerment and development. The fact that in reality the gender budget tended to amount to around 5 per cent was evidence of the difficulty of earmarking funds specifically for women. Girls and women were, however, benefiting from other plans, especially nutrition schemes and programmes targeting children.

34. **Ms. Gangte** (India), in response to Ms. Pires' request for examples of the work of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women, read out response 5 of the State party's responses to the list of issues. She also confirmed that the budget allocated to the National Commission for Women had been systematically increased over the previous three years and that the State of Jammu and Kashmir had its own State Commission for Women.

35. **Ms. Pires**, recognizing that departments must face difficulties in reaching the 30 per cent target in their Gender Budget Statement, asked in which areas failure to reach the target impacted practical services for women. The delegation had claimed that much of the budget was earmarked for nutrition, and yet the figure appeared to be only 1.4 per cent. Following up on her previous question, she asked whether commissions for women were sufficiently well financed, staffed and efficient in states other than the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

36. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao asked about the difference between the National Commission for Women and the High-Level Committee on the Status of Women and what the Ministry of Women and Child Development had done to improve the data at its disposal, since the data on ethnicity and gender aggregated by region in the report was not sufficient.

37. **Ms. Šimonović**, referring to India's reasons for not ratifying the Optional Protocol, pointed out that the abundance of national mechanisms for women's rights represented an argument in favour of granting the Committee competence to examine individual complaints regarding the violation of specific rights under the Convention. She requested an explanation of India's declarations with regard to article 5, subparagraph (a), and article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Convention and the current dialogue on the matter at the national level.

38. **Ms. Patten** said that she was unconvinced by the delegation's response to her question on the repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, since it had not addressed issues raised by the Justice Verma Committee Report. She asked whether it was true that under section 19 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, the National Human Rights

Commission did not have jurisdiction to investigate cases related to the Armed Forces. She was not satisfied with the answers given to three of her previous questions: she had not been asking about the outcomes of individual cases following the Gujarat riots, but about access to basic amenities such as victim protection; she had received no response to her questions on the participation of women in peace negotiations and on the housing project in Sri Lanka.

39. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that it was not the case that the budget allocated to women was inadequate, but that India lacked the tools to identify the proportion of the budget going exclusively to women. The Government was, however, working on making the allocations for women more visible in all programmes. The Committee member had been mistaken about the percentage of the budget allocated to nutrition, since it was far more than 1.4 per cent. State commissions for women had their own budgets and staff and were very efficient. He requested Ms. Zou Xiaoqiao to clarify her question on the quality of data on ethnicity and gender.

40. **Ms. Sekhar** (India) affirmed that her delegation had already explained its position with regard to the Optional Protocol: India was satisfied with the mechanisms it currently had in place.

41. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) reiterated that the Government could not repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act or adopt the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee Report owing to the need for security personnel in the fragile north and north-east of the country. The situation in each area was regularly reviewed and, once normalized, the Act would no longer be enforced there. He assured Committee members that, wherever possible, women's opinions were taken into account by committees involved in the peace negotiations. The delegation would provide a written response to the question on the housing project.

42. **Ms. Goel** (India) said that in the aftermath of the Gujarat riots, many relief camps had been started by voluntary agencies or community leaders using State funds and facilities. As the situation returned to normal, the camps were gradually closed and people returned home. Some 85 temporary colonies, which had superior facilities funded by the Government and held around 16,000 persons, had become permanent dwellings. The Government had also taken a number of measures to rehabilitate and compensate female victims, inter alia, through vocational training and the provision of funds for training; compensation schemes for widows; debt relief; financial and other assistance for children, the victims of communal violence and relief camp inmates.

43. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that the difference between the National Commission for Women and the High-Level Committee on the Status of Women was that the latter reported on the current status of women in the country, whereas the Commission was a permanent statutory body.

44. **Ms. Gangte** (India), reading out the relevant text from the Protection of Human Rights Act, said that India was quite unique as its National Human Rights Commission had powers to request a report from the central Government when dealing with complaints of violation of human rights by members of the Armed Forces.

Articles 4 to 6

45. **Ms. Zou** Xiaoqiao, focusing on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, on temporary special measures, asked what obstacles had slowed down the approval of the Women's Reservation Bill, which increased the number of seats reserved for women in the Parliament, given that it had first been proposed in 1996. She also wished to know why article 16 (4) of the Constitution had never been invoked and what temporary special measures the Government had taken to redress the low representation of many

disadvantaged groups in education, health and the judiciary – a question which had been in the list of issues (CEDAW/C/IND/Q/4-5), although the measures mentioned in the delegation's response were not temporary special measures.

46. **Ms. Šimonović**, referring again to India's declaration with regard to article 5, subparagraph (a), said that the phrasing of the declaration might prevent the State party from being able to intervene in the affairs of patriarchal communities. She asked what action had been taken against officials who upheld stereotypes inconsistent with the Convention, such as those made recently by high-level officials. She requested further data on the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, as some sources indicated misuse of the Act and that only 2 per cent of women were claiming their rights under it.

47. **Ms. Patten** expressed concern at the widespread violence against women from marginalized castes and communities. She asked what measures were envisioned to prevent systematic violence against such women; what efforts were being made to sensitize them to their rights and enhance their access to justice, particularly given the existence of panchayats (rural local bodies); what priority and time frame for approval the new Government would assign to the bill on the prevention of communal and targeted violence; whether the Government planned to tackle the gender aspect of the international transfer of arms; and whether it intended to revisit parts of the Act on sexual harassment of women in the workplace, such as the possibility to take action against women who made false complaints.

48. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** asked whether the Government was considering criminalizing marital rape; what measures were taken to increase the accountability of law enforcement agents; what action was taken against officials who accepted complaints filed against women by persons, often relatives, objecting to a woman's desire to exercise her freedom of choice in marriage; and what progress had been made with regard to free legal aid, which remained inaccessible to many women, especially in rural areas.

49. **Ms. Jahan** said that trafficking in persons, despite having been outlawed, remained a widespread problem in India. The State party had adopted a raft of legislative and administrative measures to curb that phenomenon but, in practice, they were seldom implemented. The lack of statistical data in the State party's report made it difficult to assess the situation of trafficking on the ground. She would like to know the number of complaints filed by victims of trafficking, the number of investigations launched and the number of perpetrators prosecuted and punished. Noting that the protection afforded to victims of trafficking varied from state to state, she asked what measures the central Government was taking to guarantee victims of trafficking equal access to protection services. She also wished to know how many anti-trafficking units had been set up and whether they possessed the human and financial resources necessary to function effectively.

50. The Committee had received reports that foreign victims of sexual and commercial exploitation were often removed without having had access to protection services, and that foreign victims of trafficking were often detained on account of their undocumented status. She asked what measures the State party envisaged taking to ensure that all victims of trafficking had access to justice and protection services and were repatriated promptly, when appropriate. She also requested an update on the status of the Roadmap and Joint Plan of Action for the safe and quick repatriation of trafficked victims.

51. Noting that prostitutes were often arrested and subjected to harassment, she recalled that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences had recommended that India should review the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, which de facto criminalized sex work, and ensure that measures to address trafficking in persons did not overshadow the need for effective measures to protect the human rights

of sex workers. She asked what measures the State party had taken to ensure that prostitutes had access to justice and health-care services, and to assist those prostitutes wishing to leave the profession.

52. **Ms. Sekhar** (India), referring to the declaration made by India under article 5, subparagraph (a), article 16, paragraph 1, said that the Indian Constitution already guaranteed a number of the rights enshrined in the Convention. While her Government would not intervene in the private affairs of any community unless requested to do so, it was committed to fulfilling the obligations assumed under the Convention and had adopted several pieces of legislation to empower women and to promote social change. As to the declaration made by India under article 16, paragraph 2, the Government was working towards making the registration of all marriages compulsory. The Supreme Court had issued guidelines on that subject and procedures for registering marriages had been introduced in a number of states. However, the vastness of the country often hampered progress in that area.

53. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that his Government was committed to protecting women's rights and had adopted new legislation to that end. Several arrests had been made in relation to the recent rape case involving two cousins in northern India and the police officers who had failed to take appropriate action had been suspended. The statements made by high-ranking officials on such cases were often distorted by the media. The Government had launched an initiative to establish a centre that could provide women with medical care, legal assistance and counselling services in each district.

54. **Ms. Goel** (India) said that the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act prescribed harsher penalties for rape, which could include life imprisonment and the death penalty, and for acid attacks, stalking and voyeurism. The Government had taken a number of steps to combat violence against women, which included campaigns to raise the awareness of public officials and the general public about violence against women; setting up police stations run exclusively by women and shelters for women who were the victims of violence; and establishing specialized courts for women. Furthermore, the central Government had instructed state governments to assess the effectiveness of their procedures for dealing with cases of violence against women and to make any adjustments necessary. The National Commission for Women conducted visits to individual states to assess the situation of women on the ground and investigated serious crimes against women. The Government had also underscored the need to mainstream a gender perspective in training for police officers. The measures taken had led to more incidents of violence against women being reported and to more perpetrators being prosecuted and punished.

55. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that marital rape was mentioned in the Criminal Code. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act provided that domestic violence also included sexual abuse.

56. **Ms. Goel** (India) said that an anti-trafficking portal (http://stophumantrafficking-mha.nic.in/) had recently been established to share essential information on trafficking in persons with all relevant stakeholders. It was also planned to set up around 300 anti-trafficking units, which would provide specialized training on trafficking in persons to police officers. In addition, a series of seminars had been organized to raise the awareness among judicial officers of various issues related to trafficking in persons. The Indian Constitution provided that foreign victims of trafficking could also access protection services in India. Undocumented foreign victims of trafficking were not prosecuted under Indian law.

57. **Mr. Kumar** (India) said that the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, which had recently been revised and strengthened, served to protect disadvantaged groups of women. Specialized prosecutors had been appointed to

deal with cases involving such groups, and units had been set up to monitor their situation at the district level. Police officers received special training on how to assist them and an effort had been made to recruit more police officers from such disadvantaged groups.

58. **Ms. Gangte** (India) said that the National Legal Services Authority provided free legal assistance to disadvantaged groups and helped to settle disputes. Furthermore, the Government had launched a programme to ensure that women from disadvantaged groups had access to justice. Under that programme, a fund had been established to support activities intended to raise the awareness of such women of their legal rights in a number of areas.

59. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that the Criminal Code provided that a man could have non-consensual sexual intercourse with his wife when she was aged 15 or over without it being considered rape. Noting that the Justice Verma Committee Report had recommended that the exception of marital rape should be removed from the definition of rape contained in the Criminal Code, she asked whether the State party intended to act upon its recommendation.

60. **Ms. Patten** asked how many police officers had been prosecuted for not filing a first information report and whether the police officers who had failed to act in the case of the two cousins had been prosecuted.

61. **Ms. Jahan** asked whether the gender perspective had been included in the Roadmap and Joint Plan of Action for the safe and quick repatriation of trafficked victims and in the draft protocol to address cross-border trafficking.

62. **Ms. Šimonović**, noting that the declarations made under article 5, subparagraph (a), and article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Convention ran counter to its spirit and purpose and to the State party's constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, asked whether the State party planned to withdraw them.

63. **Ms. Pimentel** said that sex selection at birth was a great cause of concern for the Committee. Moreover, the practice had begun to affect the gender demographics of the population. She asked what measures the State party had taken to curb that practice.

64. **Mr. Aggarwal** (India) said that the practice of sex selection at birth was illegal but still widespread in India. The Government planned to track pregnancies from the earliest stage to deter mothers from practising sex selection at birth. There was also a need to raise the awareness of the general public of the practice and its negative consequences. The police officers who had failed to act in the case of the two cousins had been suspended and subsequently dismissed.

65. **Ms. Goel** (India) said that cases had been registered against those police officers following their arrest and that the case had subsequently been referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

66. **Ms. Gangte** (India) said that statistical data on trafficking in persons could be accessed through the anti-trafficking portal. In 2010, the Supreme Court had appointed a panel to make recommendations on how to prevent trafficking in persons and rehabilitate sex workers who wished to leave the profession.

Articles 7 to 9

67. **Ms. Haidar**, noting that women were persistently underrepresented in Indian political life, said that the Committee welcomed the State party's intention to reserve a third of the seats in the Parliament for women and the increased representation of women in the Executive. She asked what measures the State party was taking to build the capacity of female politicians at all levels; whether it had earmarked budgetary resources for capacity-

building activities; and how it encouraged political parties to increase female membership. She also wished to know whether the State party had considered adopting temporary special measures to remedy the lack of female judges serving at the different levels of the judiciary. The Committee continued to view the seemingly uneven representation of women in public and political life in the different regions of the country and the conspicuous absence of women from decision-making and the Naga peace process as causes for concern. Lastly, she asked what measures the State party had taken to increase the representation of women in the Indian Foreign Service.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.